

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

The Coach House, Coleham Primary School, Shrewsbury

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY



CPAT Report No 735.1

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Report for the Governors of Coleham Primary School

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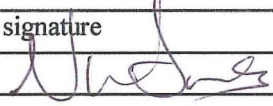
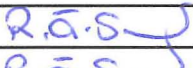

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) were invited to undertake a programme of archaeological recording in connection with the restoration of the former coach house which now lies within the grounds of Coleham Primary School, in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.
- 1.2 The building in question was originally the Coach House associated with the adjacent property of The Limes, Belle Vue Road, a grade II listed building (Ref 653-1/4/100; SMR No 17507; NGR SJ 49491187).
- 1.3 Following the completion of the original report in September 2005 a length of revetment wall was revealed during the course of further building works. This was recorded under a watching brief on 7 October 2005 and this report was revised immediately thereafter.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A programme of background historical research was undertaken investigating the following archives: Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record; Shrewsbury Records and Research Centre.
- 2.2 Although development in the Coleham area of Shrewsbury began during the medieval period, in association with Shrewsbury Abbey, it was not until much later that this expanded as far as the site under consideration here. Plans of the town by John Speed in 1610 and John Rocque in 1746 both show some buildings along Longden Coleham, but only fields where The Limes was later to be built.
- 2.3 The earliest cartographic evidence which reveals any occupation of the area is Hitchcock's map of Shrewsbury in 1832 (Fig. 1) which shows an L-shaped building on the site of the coach house, with a small building to the south, and large building beyond, presumably a house.

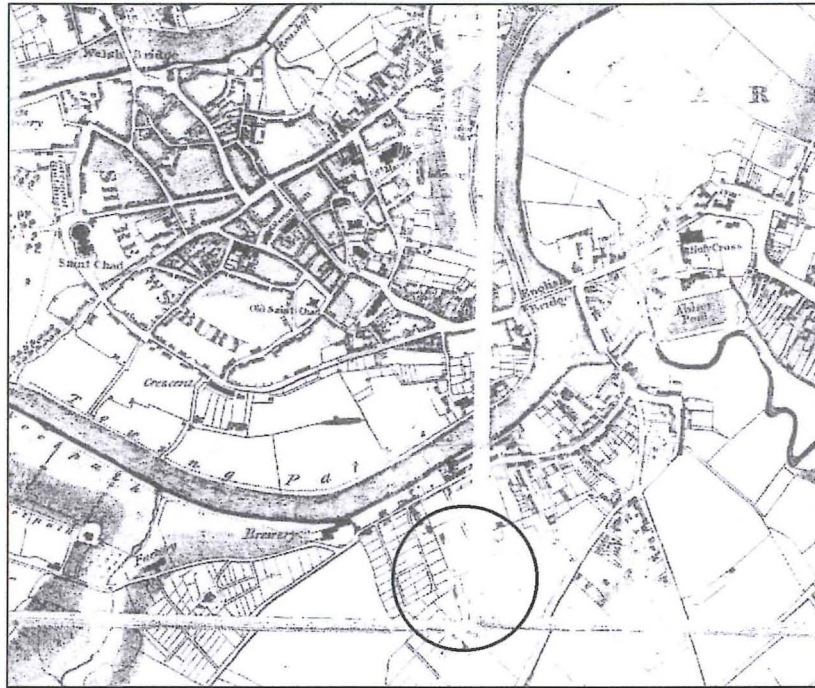


Fig. 1 Map of the Borough of Shrewsbury by A Hitchcock, 1832

- 2.4 The Tithe Survey for Shrewsbury, St Julian's parish, dated 1848 (Fig. 2), and the accompanying Apportionment, dated 1845, show the same buildings as the 1832 map. The survey identifies a house, perhaps a farmhouse (No 139), to the north of which is an enclosed area recorded as a rickyard (No. 142), within which are two buildings, presumably associated with the storage of hay. The southern building is L-shaped and lies on the site of the present Coach House. At this time the recorded owner was Samuel Pountney Smith and later William Hazledine.

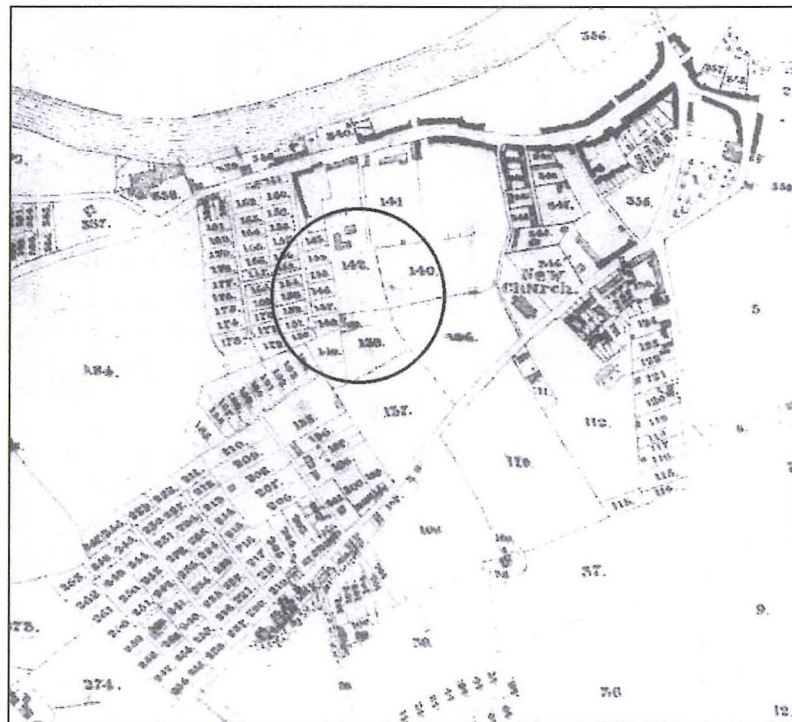


Fig. 2 Tithe Survey of Shrewsbury St Julian's Parish, 1848

- 2.5 The Limes was built around 1860 by Samuel Pountney Smith, and may have incorporated at least part of the earlier house. The house survives and is of stone, brick and timber construction, inspired by early 17th-century design. The house has two storeys with a partial cellar and an attic. The main block incorporates early masonry in the front elevation, with close studding and quatrefoil panelled timber work above, much of which is 17th-century, although not necessarily in situ. The central entrance hall has a large timbered, gabled porch with stained-glass side lights while the cross wing to its left has a stone traceried window on the ground floor, with a projecting oriel window above, and attic window formed by pierced decorative framing. To the right of the entrance is a slightly projecting, squared, bay window with mullions, and an oriel window above. Cable molding and incised quatrefoil decoration on many of the main timbers is typical of early 17th-century detail elsewhere in Shrewsbury. Part of the service wing is in brick, with casement windows on the ground floor and oriel windows above, and part in brick and stone with a jettied gable.
- 2.6 The house is shown on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1882 (Fig. 3), with a driveway approaching from Belle Vue Road, landscaped gardens to the east and the Coach House to the north. The area to the east of the Coach House was then a timber yard, although this had ceased by 1902, with Coleham Primary School eventually occupying part of the site.

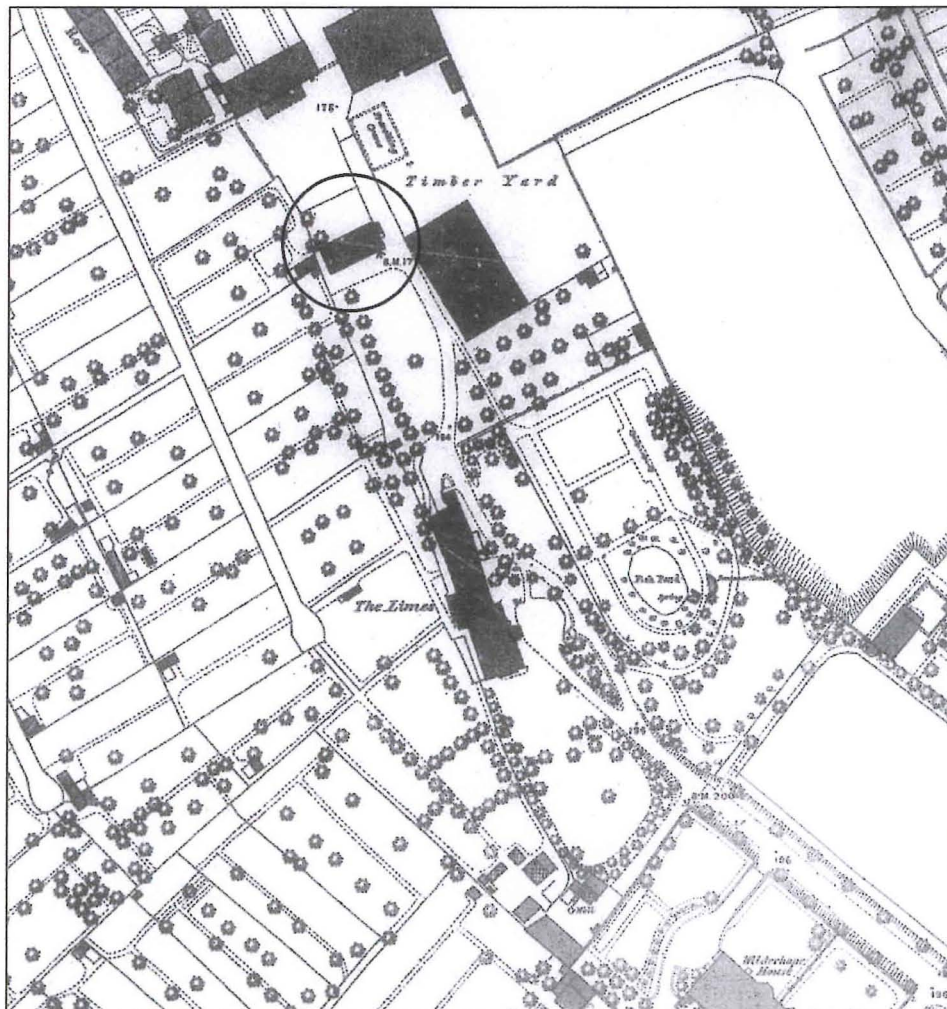


Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey detailed map, 1882

- 2.7 A search through the Census records for St Julian's parish shows The Limes as being first recorded in 1871, suggesting that the house was not built, or at least not occupied, until after the 1861 census. In 1871 the house was occupied by Thomas L Barry, a clergyman aged 49, and his wife Anne, also aged 49, both originally from Ireland. They had four children: Mary (aged 23), Elizabeth (aged 21), David (aged 12), and George (aged 6). Also living there at the time was a divinity student named Robert H Godwin (aged 23) from Winchester, and three servants: Mary (surname illegible), a nurse aged 70, from Ireland; the cook, Sarah Jeffreys, aged 23 from Oswestry; and a waitress, Elizabeth Williams, aged 18 from Clungunford. In addition, there were also two scholars living as boarders, Bernard G Gudt, aged 16 from India, and Robert M Harrison, also aged 16 and from Welshpool.
- 2.8 In 1881 the house was occupied by Samuel Pountney Smith, alderman and architect, aged 68, and his wife Mary, aged 59. They had seven children, all born in Shrewsbury except for the eldest, who was born in Berrington: Alice (aged 36); Adelaide (aged 27); Susannah (aged 25); Harriet (aged 23); Samuel (aged 21), an architect's assistant; Florence (aged 12), a scholar; and Katherine (aged 15), a scholar. In addition there were three servants: a housemaid, Fanny Mallore (aged 20) from Stafford; a ladies maid, Emma Farr (aged 23) from Shrewsbury; and a cook, Jane Thomas (aged 34) from Wales.
- 2.9 The 1891 census records the house as occupied by George Freeman aged 34, a Captain in Her Majesty's Reserve of Officers and Chief Constable of Shropshire, and his wife Lavinia, aged 33, both of whom were from Hampshire. They had four children: Rose (aged 6), who was born in Hampshire; Anthony (aged 3), born in Egypt; (name illegible) born in Lancashire; and George (2 months), born in Shrewsbury. Their staff included: a nurse, Sarah Francis (aged 41); a cook, Sarah Cadinam (aged 34); two housemaids, Edith White (aged 15) and Ethel Edge (aged 15); and a groom, Richard Tomlin (aged 20) from Meole Brace. It is interesting that this is the only reference to a groom and there is no reference to a coachman. It is possible that Richard Tomlin lived in the coachman's quarters in the Coach House during his employment at The Limes.
- 2.10 By the 1901 census the house had changed hands again being occupied by William Drew, aged 36, a headmaster from Bridport, and his wife, aged 22, from Edgerton, Lancashire. They appear to have had no children of their own living with them, but did have three children as boarders: Geoffrey Hoffman (aged 11) from Hexham; Reginald Hoffman (aged 9) from Hexham; and Edgar Dolphan (aged 9) from Long Eaton.

3 BUILDING SURVEY AND RECORDING

- 3.1 A programme of detailed building recording was carried out, generally following the prescription for a Level 2 Survey as identified in RCHME 1996 *Recording Historic Buildings: a descriptive specification*. Initially, this was undertaken using the existing architects drawings, although the additional of further detail eventually resulted in most of the building being re-surveyed, from which a new set of plans was produced. The survey included a photographic record with general and more detail views in digital format (4 megapixels).
- 3.2 At the time of the survey the ground floor of the building was still in use as a store and consequently further recording was undertaken once the restoration programme was underway and the rooms had been cleared. Also at this time three small test pits were excavated in the floor of the main part of the coach house to investigate the possibility

of earlier floor layers. Although none was identified, the results did reveal the methods used to lay the existing flooring, details of which are given below.

- 3.3 The building is sub-rectangular, measuring 5.75m wide and 12.6m long on the west side, but only 12.05m long on the east side. Generally, the building shows two periods of construction which broadly divide into the ground floor, constructed in random stone rubble with dressed quoins, and the first floor, which is constructed in brick with timber studwork and weatherboarding (Plates 1 and 3). These reflect a change in use with the original, presumably agricultural building, being modified for use as a coach house.

Ground floor (Fig. 5)

- 3.4 The ground floor is divided into three unequal rooms, the larger of which, at the southern end, was the coach room (Plate 2). A brick-paved drain ran north to south, to the west of which the flooring consisted of cobbles (Plate 5), while to the east it was brick pavers, with a further area of cobbling along the eastern wall. A square gap in the bricks suggested the position of an upright post set beneath one of the beams supporting the floor above. Small test pits excavated through the various surfaces revealed that the brick pavers had been laid on a lime mortar screed 10mm thick, on top of a bed of compacted sand and ash 120mm thick, above a layer of rubble. The cobbles were set in a sand matrix above a layer of compacted rubble. The flooring appeared to be contemporary with the conversion of the building into a coach house and there was no evidence for an earlier floor.
- 3.5 The main entrance into the coach house was through a set of double doors in the west wall which had been inserted, possibly widening an earlier entrance. The stonework of the ground floor wall had clearly been cut back, with bricks used to infill along the southern side of the door, while a large timber post had been introduced to form the northern side of the doorway, again with some brick used to infill the masonry (Fig. 7). On the exterior, between the door and the south-west corner of the building, an Ordnance Survey bench mark has been inscribed into the masonry.
- 3.6 There is a single doorway at the west end of the south wall which appears to be an original feature, with chamfered brickwork forming the eastern door jamb. At the eastern end of the southern wall a stub of walling projects beyond the building, indicating that originally a masonry wall continued to the east evidently survived after the conversion to a coach house, as evidenced by projecting brickwork at first floor level (Figs 6 and 9; Plate 4). In the east wall there are five ventilation holes, four of which have iron grills, while one has been infilled.
- 3.7 To the north of the coach room were the stables, divided from it by an inserted timber paneled partition. The room measured 5 x 3.6m internally and was floored throughout with blue brick stable blocks with a drain running north to south and then westwards to an outlet beneath the west wall. It was evident that the existing double doorway in the west wall had enlarged an earlier opening, an area of concrete indicating where the walling had been removed.
- 3.8 A number of stable fittings survive, including an iron manger in the north-east corner of the room, partly across the only window, and a tethering ring and two hooks in the wooden partition dividing the stables from the living quarters at the northern end of the building.
- 3.9 The living quarters were entered through a single door from the stables and were floored with tiles throughout (Plate 7). The north and east walls were covered with wooden paneling and the partition with the stables retains three tack hooks behind the

door. The room had a single window in the west wall, the sill of which has been raised, and an off-centre fireplace on the northern wall. An open timber staircase in the south-east corner led to the first-floor accommodation (Plate 8).

- 3.10 A length of wall was revealed at the north-west corner of the building, extending westwards and then curving to the south. The wall, which was in a poor and unstable condition, had been constructed as a revetment against the higher ground to the north. The wall was constructed in random sandstone blocks with lime mortar and stood to a maximum of 1.95m against the building (Plate 9). The curving section of the wall survived to between one and five courses above ground level (Plate 10).

First floor (Fig. 6)

- 3.11 The first floor appears to date entirely from the conversion of the building into a coach house and comprises a large hay loft with separate living accommodation at the northern end, accessed via timber stairs for the ground floor. The entrance into the loft was via an external timber staircase and a door in the centre of the southern wall. Although the staircase has been removed, the position of some of the timbers can be identified where they were tied into the masonry (Fig. 9).
- 3.12 The hay loft had a wooden partition at the northern end forming a narrow room with an entrance against the west wall. Externally on the east elevation (Fig. 8) a blocked window is visible with the brick arch surviving.
- 3.13 The southern wall of the loft is in brick, while the west and most of the eastern walls are weather boarded onto studwork between brick pillars. Most of the studwork has chiseled assembly marks in Roman numerals and while these run sequentially along the west wall, this is not so for the eastern wall.
- 3.14 At the northern end of the building the first floor living quarters have a single window in the west wall, but no other surviving fixtures and fittings.
- 3.15 The roof is supported on three roof trusses, each with a king post and principal rafters with struts to a tie beam at eaves level (Plate 6). There is one canted purlin on either side of the roof. The original roofing is likely to have been in slate, and the existing roof covering is a replacement in fibre slates with ceramic ridge tiles.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Coach House is an interesting building which shows two phase of construction, each associated with a different function. The original building was constructed of random stone rubble with dressed quoins and may have had only a single storey. The cartographic evidence suggests that it was built sometime before 1832 as an agricultural building within a rickyard associated with a farm, the house for which lay further to the south and may have been incorporated into The Limes shortly after 1860.
- 4.2 Following the construction of The Limes the building was converted into a coach house and stables with a hay loft above and living accommodation at one end. This was achieved by the addition of a first floor constructed in brick and weather boarded studwork, with the creation of new or enlarged doorways on the ground floor.
- 4.3 Although The Limes seems to have been built by Samuel Pountney Smith he does not appear to have been the first person to have lived there and in fact may have only spent a few years in residence around 1881. Despite the existence of living quarters in the

coach house, the census records between 1871 and 1901 only record one instance of a groom living at The Limes: Richard Tomlin in 1891.

5 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank the following for their assistance during the project: Graham Dench, Donald Insall Associates; the staff of Coleham Primary School; the staff of Michael Healey and Son, Building and Civil Engineers; the staff of Shrewsbury Records and Research Centre; Penny Ward and Sally Thompson, Sites and Monuments Record, Shropshire County Council.

6 SOURCES

A plan of Shrewsbury as delineated by Mr John Speed, 1610.

Plan of Shrewsbury by John Rocque, 1746.

Map of the Borough of Shrewsbury as extended and settled by Act of Parliament July 15th 1832 in the 3rd year of the reign of King William the Fourth, by A Hitchcock. Published October 22nd 1832.

Tithe Survey for Shrewsbury St Julian's Parish, Coleham (No. 93), 1848 and Apportionment, 1845. Ref: PF256/1/1.

Ordnance Survey 1:500 series sheet 34.11.16, surveyed 1881, published 1882.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:2,500 map, 34.11, surveyed 1879-80, revised 1900-01, published 1902.

Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 1:2,500 map, 34.11, revised 1925, published 1927.

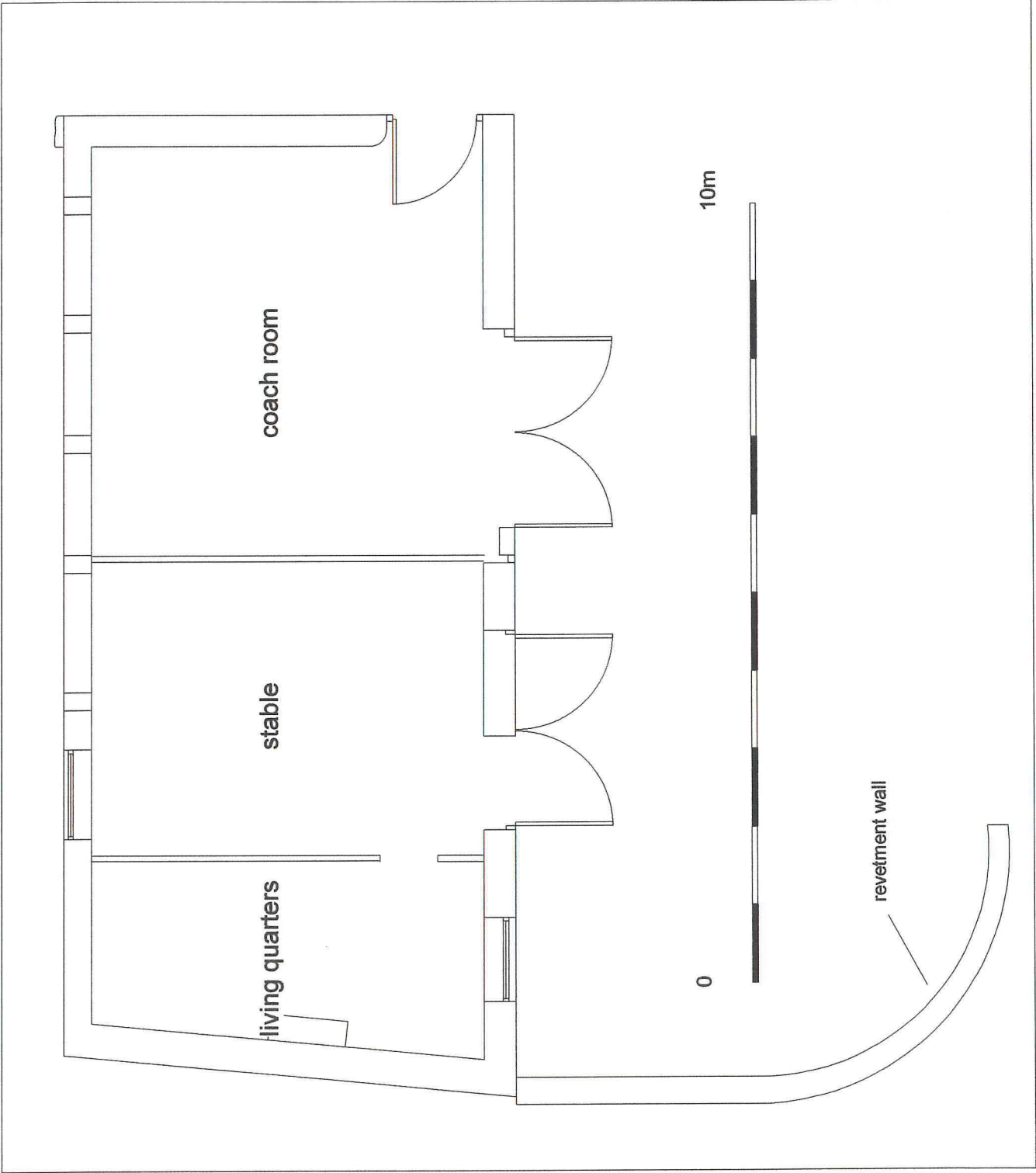


Fig. 4 Ground floor overall plan

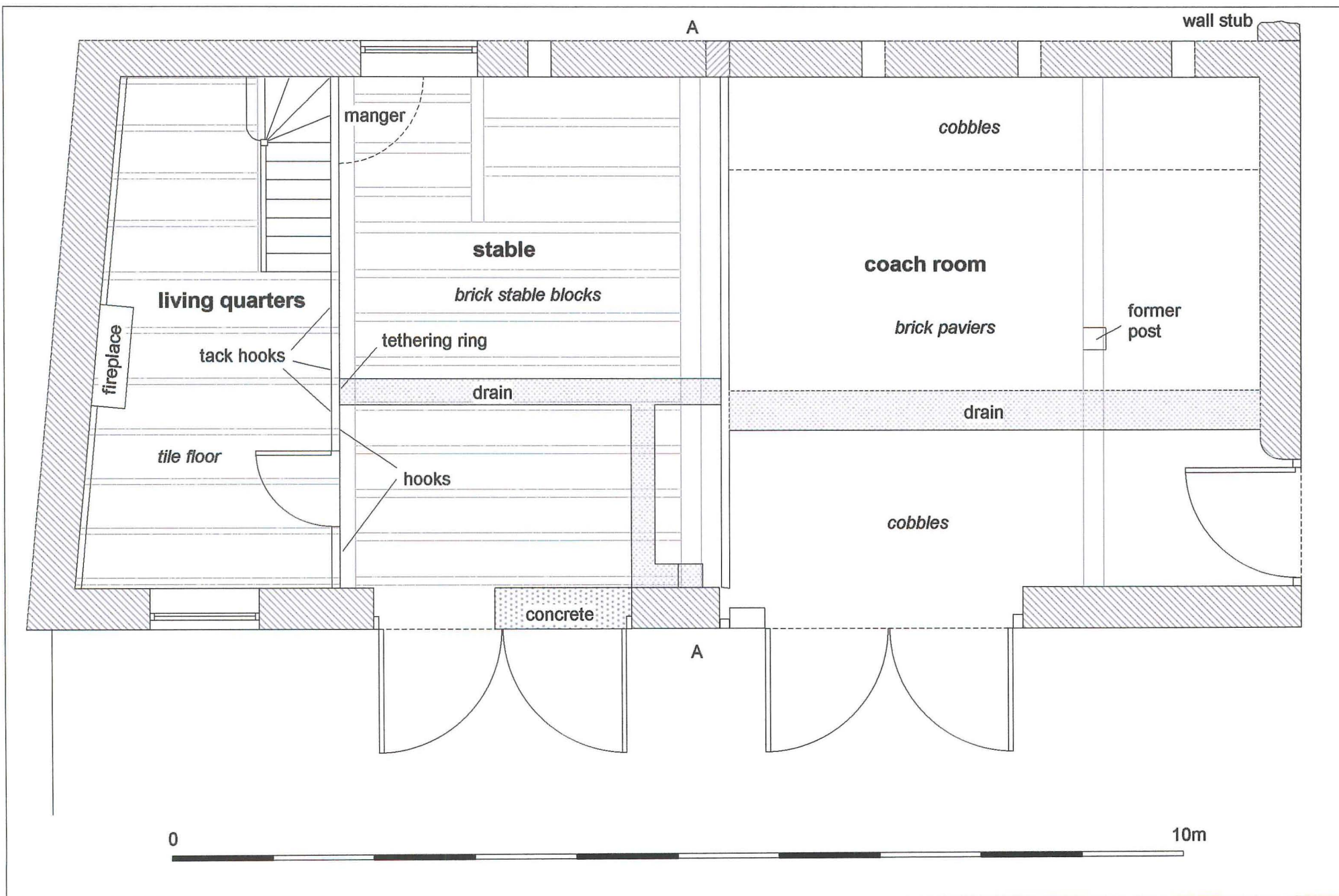


Fig. 5 Ground floor plan

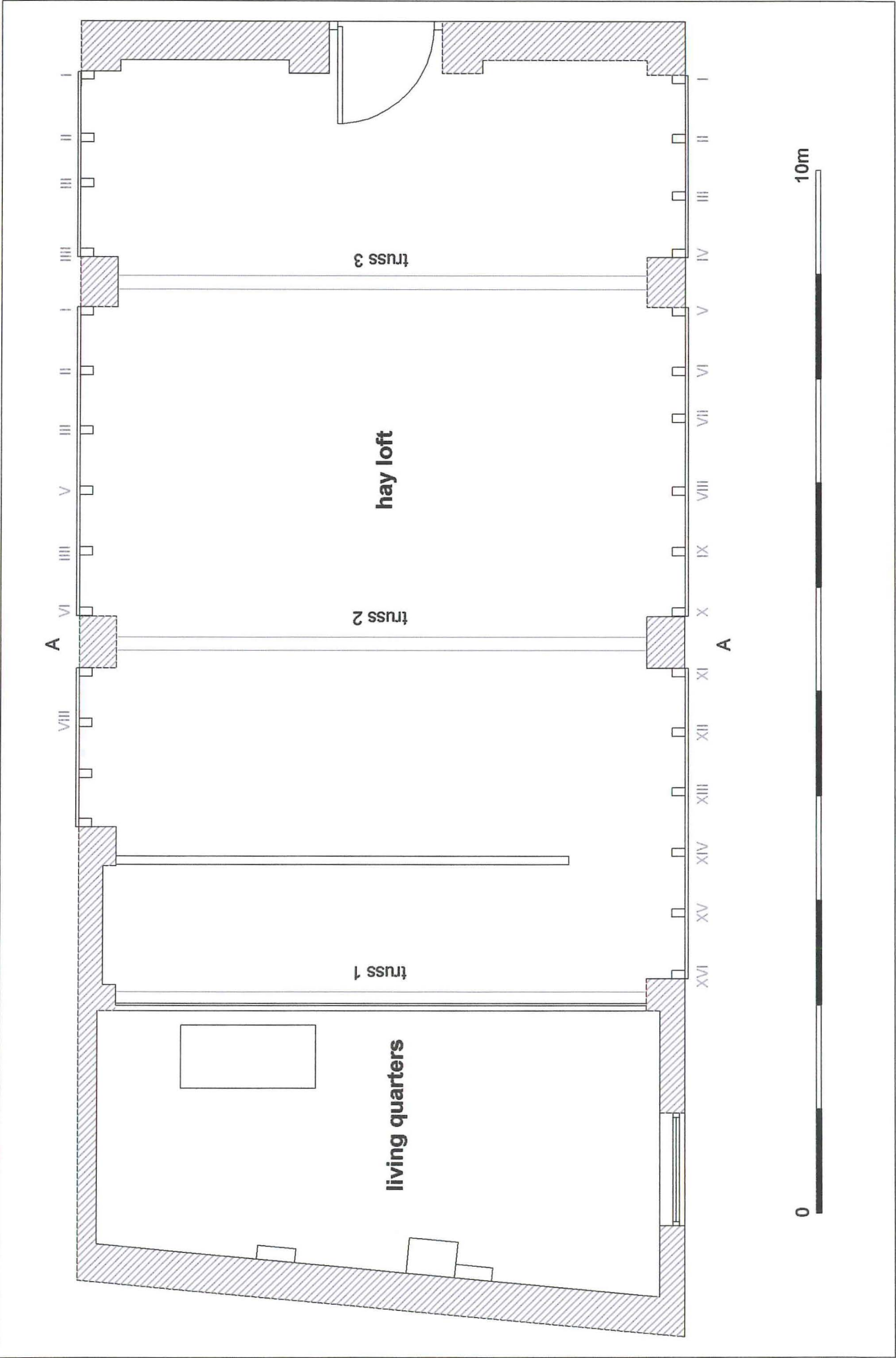


Fig. 6 First floor plan

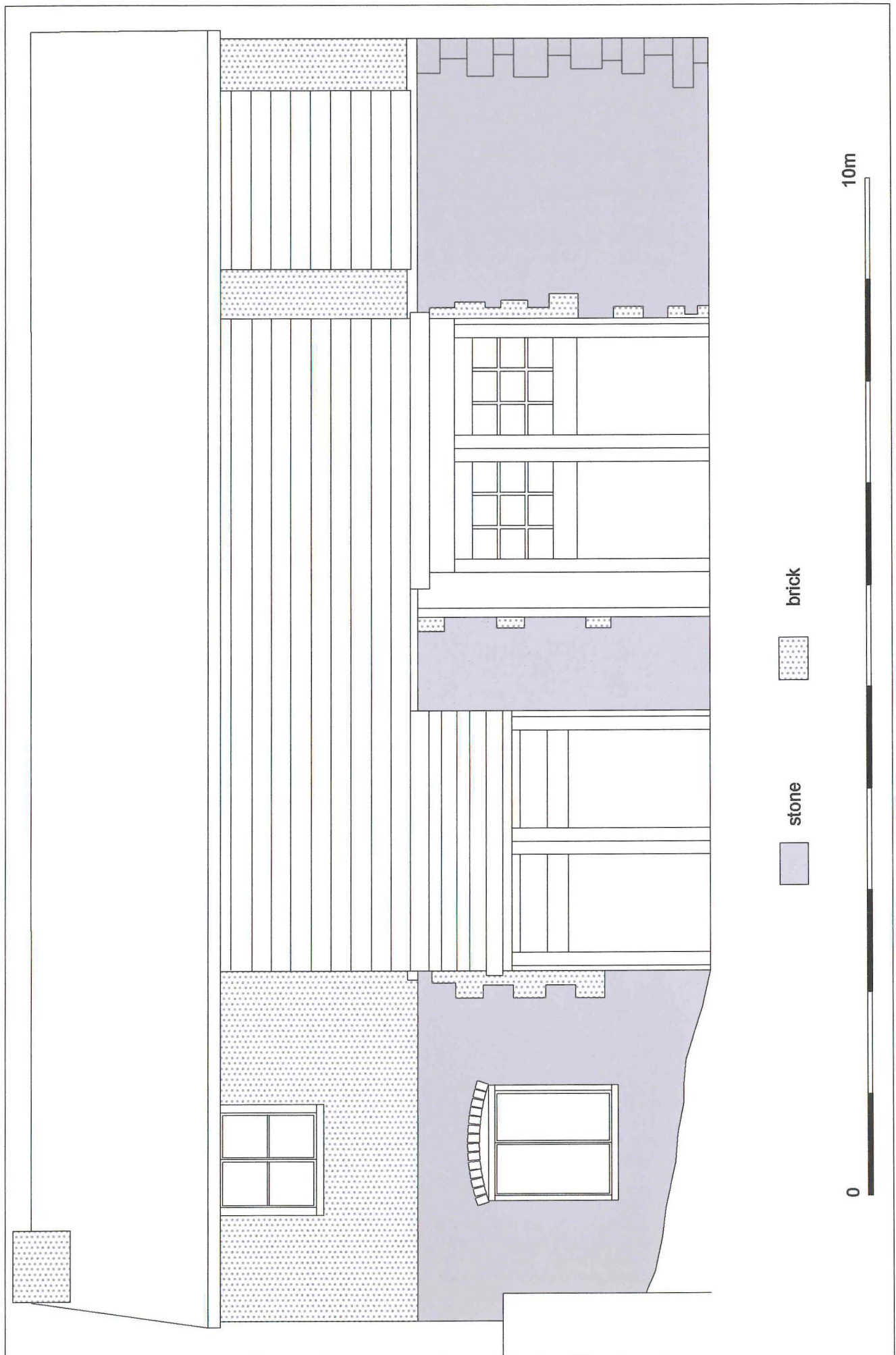


Fig. 7 West elevation

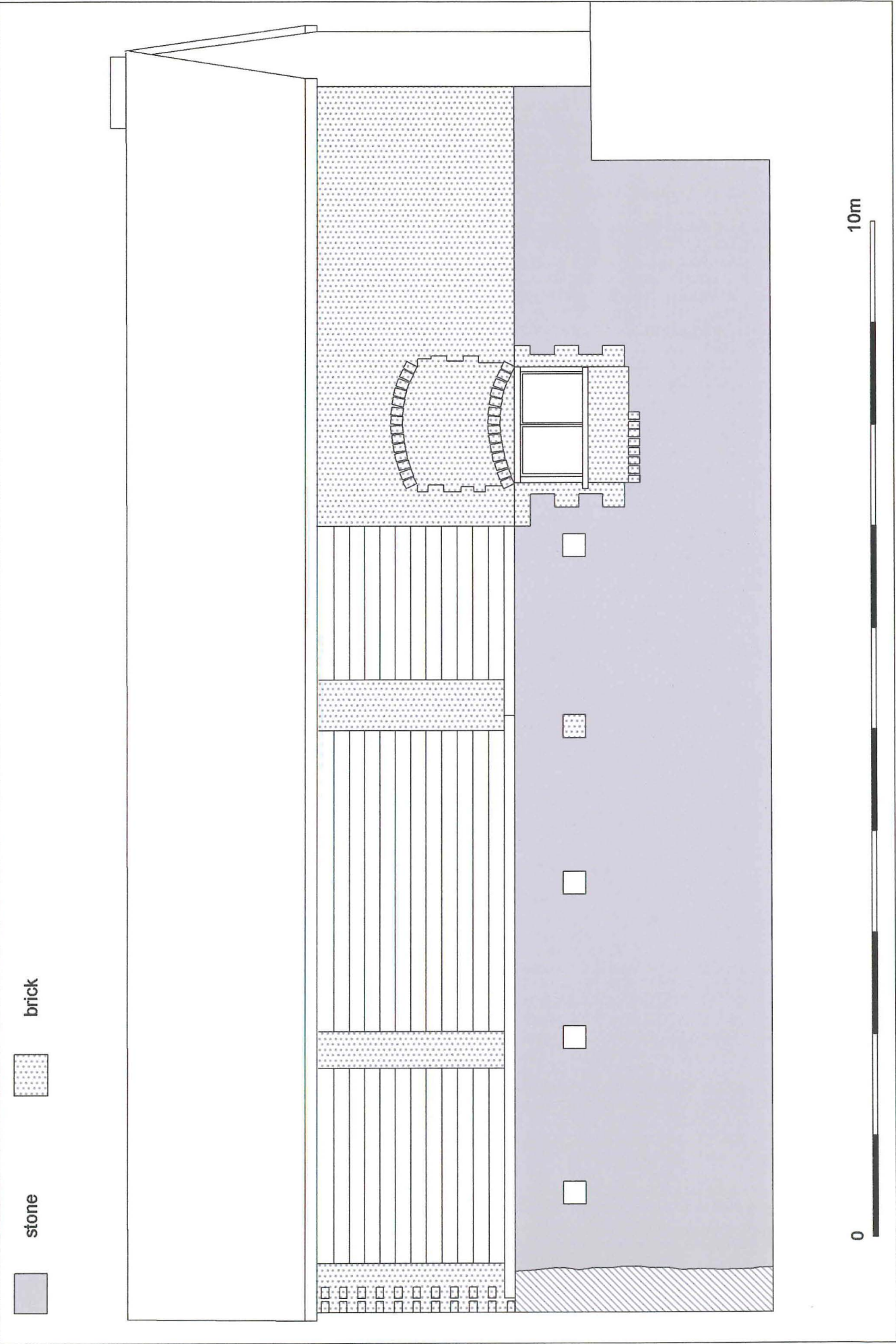


Fig. 8 East elevation

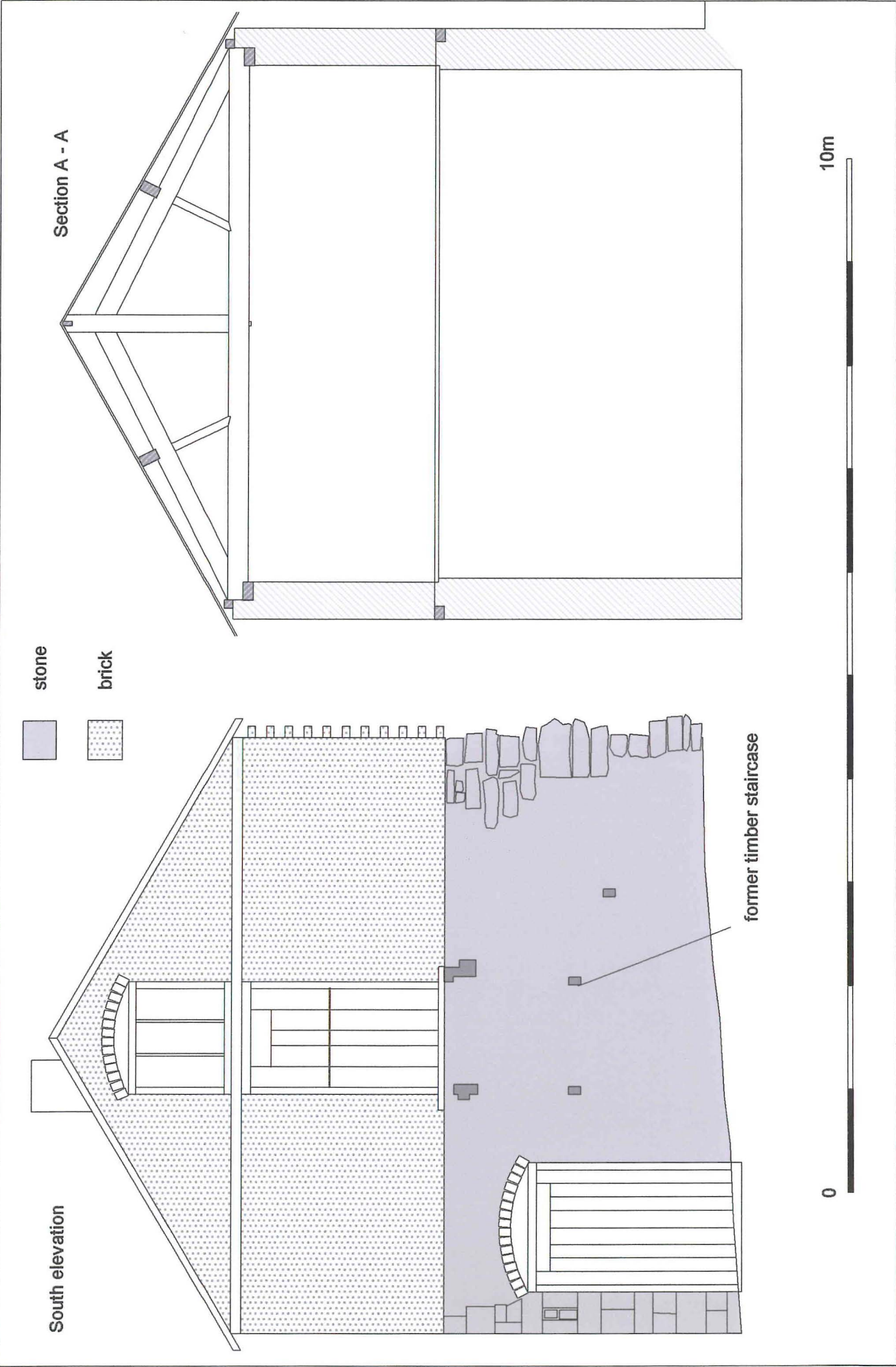


Fig. 9 South elevation and section A-A



Plate 1 West elevation. Photo CPAT 1958-18



Plate 2 Interior of the coach room and stables. Photo CPAT 1958-35



Plate 3 East elevation. Photo CPAT 1958-15



Plate 4 South elevation. Photo CPAT 1958-13



Plate 5 Drain and flooring in the coach room. Photo CPAT 1958-11



Plate 6 Truss 2 from north. Photo CPAT 1958-05



Plate 7 Coachman's quarters. Photo CPAT 1958-26



Plate 8 Coachman's quarters, Photo CPAT 1958-25



Plate 9 Revetment wall, eastern end. Photo CPAT 1958-38



Plate 10 Revetment wall, western end. Photo CPAT 1958-41